

A brief history of the First Norwegian-
Danish Baptist Church, Minneapolis,
Minnesota.

Minneapolis. First Norwegian-Danish
Baptist Church.

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Central BAPTIST
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



KANSAS CITY, KANSAS

First
Norwegian-Danish
Baptist Church

Minneapolis, Minn.

Fifty Years

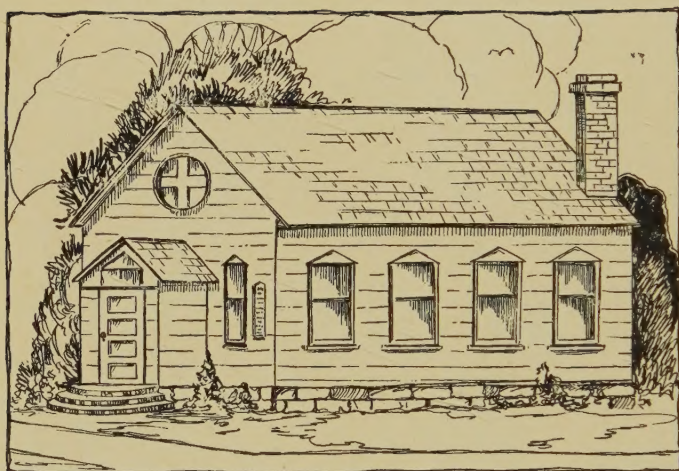


Jubilee Anniversary

1879

June 7-9

1929



THE FIRST CHURCH
1880

A Brief History
of the
First Norwegian-Danish
Baptist Church

Minneapolis, Minn.



Fifty Years
May 28th, 1879 - May 28th, 1929



“And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year.” (Lev.25-10)

Jubilee Anniversary
June 7-9, 1929

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INTRODUCTION

THE city of Minneapolis has a wonderful location. The banks of the Mississippi river stand high and strong, dressed with trees and shrubbery which form a bulwark to keep the river from overflowing and bringing destruction to life and property in the city and surrounding country. In and around the city we find beautiful lakes and drives which are not surpassed anywhere. Parks and playgrounds are in abundance. The famous flour mills and many other industries have given work and food to thousands of people in Minnesota and neighboring states. Minnehaha Falls or (laughing waters) from which our city gets part of its name is another place of interest. The State University, many colleges, and a great number of public schools are located here. Minneapolis has a large population of Scandinavian people. These sturdy folk have wrought well. They have built good homes and fine churches, and have educated their children. They have also been entrusted with many official positions in the city, state, and nation.

May 28, 1879, the Norwegian Danish Baptist Church was organized with 27 members. These charter members and others have now for 50 years wrought, prayed, and sacrificed, in order to maintain the church and keep the good work going on in the city of their choice. These have stood sturdy and strong like the trees on the banks of the river, for they were deep-rooted in the river of living water. They always stood against sin and evil. With the preaching of the Gospel and their Christian lives, they called men and women to seek God. They have prayed, "Thy kingdom come, and thy will be done." God heard their prayers, and the work of the church prospered. They also prayed, "Give us this day our daily bread." God heard them again, and gave them strength to toil for their needs, and food was given in abundance. Looking back on the past 50 years, as a church, we can surely see God's goodness and his guiding hand. We are compelled with the Psalmist of old to say, "Not unto us O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory for thy mercy, and for thy truths sake." We also hope that our young people of today will understand their responsibility in taking up the work that the older members will soon be compelled to lay down. May they carry it on with even greater devotion and success than has been shown the past 50 years.

N. NELSON.

A BRIEF HISTORY

given at the

Fiftieth Anniversary of the First Norwegian-Danish Baptist Church of Minneapolis, Minnesota

IT IS with thanks and praise to God, as we look over the past fifty years of the work of this church, how our loving Father and Saviour Jesus Christ has led this little band of believers to accomplish as much as they have in winning souls for Christ and spreading the Gospel to other nations as well. We invite our friends to join with us today in profound thanksgiving for God's gracious dealing with us as a church during these fifty years of organized life and endeavors in the upbuilding of God's cause among our people.

In the autumn of 1875 a few Norwegian and Danish Baptists, members of the First Swedish Baptist Church, located on 6th Street and 12th Avenue South, decided to begin a mission, with the specific purpose of bringing the Gospel to their countrymen in their own language. Meetings were first held in Brother Bertel Ammunsen's home on 6th Street between 13th and 14th Avenues South. The preaching of God's word was by Brother O. C. Larson, a man of their own number, gifted with a warm heart, understanding mind and zeal for the salvation of immortal souls. One of his sons is still with us today, as one of the bona fide charter members of the church, Brother Charles M. Larson.

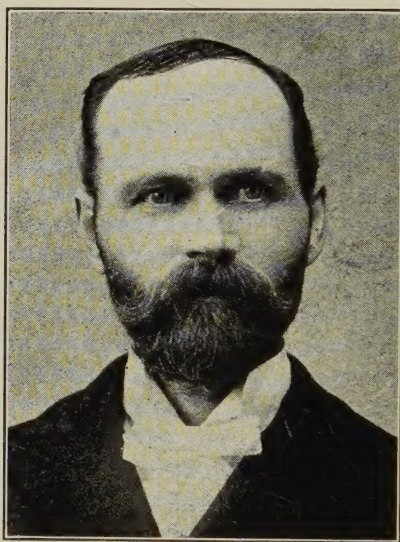
This early beginning was continued and prospered until Brother Larson's sickness and death in the winter of 1876, when it was discontinued for lack of leaders.

In the winter of 1877 a great revival went through the Swedish church, through the preaching and labor of their young and gifted pastor, A. B. Orgren. Among those who were converted were a number of Norwegians and Danes. Together with those who had assisted Brother Larson, again followed the heavenly call and started another mission among their countrymen in the spring of 1878. The new leader in this mission was a young man, Rev. J. A. H. Johnson, from Morgan Park, Ill. The new place of meeting was a famous coffee house on 3rd Street between 7th and 8th Avenues South. This place proved unsatisfactory, because others had meetings there also, and dates conflicted.

The mission then found a convenient hall upstairs in the Centennial block on Washington Avenue between 5th and 6th Avenues South. This building stands yet. Take a pilgrimage down and look it over.

Again the mission moved, this time to Blekken's hall on Nicollet Avenue between 2nd Street and Washington Avenue. These movings were like rolling snowballs; they grew larger, so did the mission.

On Wednesday evening, May 28, 1879, the members of the Baptist mission, according to previous arrangement, met for business in the First Swedish Baptist church. The business was nothing less than to be organized into a regular Baptist church. Rev. John Anderson, Pastor of the Swedish Church, called the council to order. Rev. Palmer was elected moderator and Rev. H. L. House, Pastor of Fifth Avenue Baptist Church, Secretary. The council consisted of 14 brethren representing 3 American and 2 Swedish Baptist churches. The newly organized First Norwegian-Danish Baptist Church began its life's function with 27 members, namely: Frederik Petersen, Mrs. Cornelia Petersen, Hans H. Ammunsen, Mrs. Marie Ammunsen, Wm. Johnson, Mrs. Amanda Johnson, Bertel Ammunsen, Mrs. Lena Ammunsen, Miss Anna Martinsen, Miss Therese B. Johnson, Miss Lotta Swan, Miss Gina Bridesen, Miss Anna Nordgren, Charley Ericksen, Miss Mina Petersen, Lars R. Johnsen, Mrs. Hannah B. Johnsen, Martin Guldbrandsen, Mrs. Ingeborg Guldbrandsen, Charles M. Lar-



REV. J. A. H. JOHNSON

First Pastor

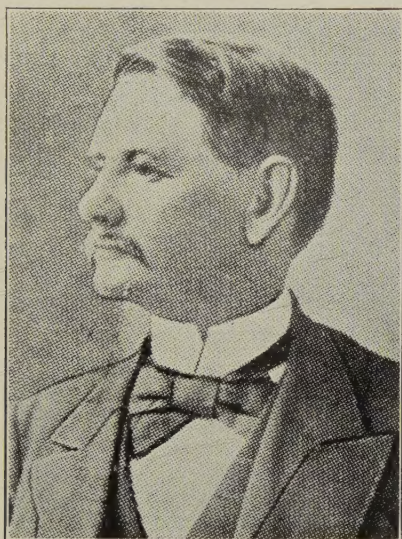
son, Mrs. Tolla Lund, Miss Carie Siversen, Miss Volborg Jensen, Charley L. Jensen, Mrs. Anna Jensen, Gunder Olson, J. A. H. Johnson—11 brothers and 16 sisters.

Rev. J. A. H. Johnson was elected first Pastor of this church. The Board of Deacons elected were Wm. Johnson and Fred Petersen, who is still with us. Secretary elected was Hans H. Ammunsen, to whose painstaking work we are greatly indebted for much of this history, and a great deal more recorded detail. The church treasurer elected was Lars R. Johnsen, and he served well.

Trustees elected were Hans H. Ammunsen, Wm. Johnson and Lars R. Johnsen.

Rev. J. A. H. Johnson labored in the mission one year and eleven months before the organization of the church, and ten months after. During this period Johnson baptized 23 and 42 in all were added to the church.

Rev. Iver Larsen, his successor as Pastor, began his work August 1, 1880. The church built its first little chapel 40 feet long, 24 feet wide and 14-foot ceiling. It was erected on a leased lot on 11th Avenue and 5th Street South. The church rejoiced much in their little house of worship. The building was begun September 29, 1880, and opened for service on Sunday, November 21, the same year.



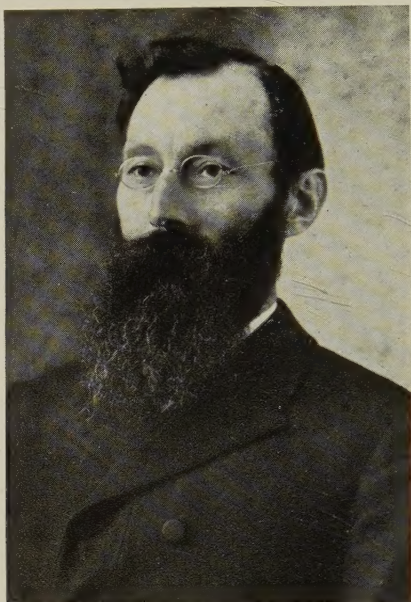
REV. E. S. SUNDT

During the pastorate of Rev. E. S. Sundt, which began October 1, 1882, the church purchased the lot on 13th Avenue and 7th Street South, 55x165 feet, for \$4,375.00, which included a house on the rear of the lot facing 13th Avenue, and rented for \$30.00 per month. The church was moved on the front end of this lot, and almost lost to view among the numerous large trees surrounding it. The Tabernacle had now found a resting place. During Brother Sundt's ministry here he baptized 36 persons and 56 members were added during his two years and one month.

Here God blessed His little flock, with the addition of many saved and precious souls, who became possessed with the same spirit and faith in the great mission field, Minneapolis and the surrounding country.

One little revival after another swept over our field, always resulting in numeral and spiritual growth.

It was during Iver Larsen's second pastorate here, which began October 1, 1885, that the church found it necessary to enlarge its meeting place.



REV. IVER LARSON

The 24th of October, 1890, work began on the new church building. The chapel was moved over on the 13th Avenue side and constituted the smaller auditorium. March 1, 1891, the new church was so near ready that services could be begun, and four believers were baptized that day.

During the winter while the new edifice was being erected we met together with the mother church on 8th Street and 13th Avenue South. Our Sunday School was housed in the gallery facing 8th Street South. Midweek prayer meetings and church business meeting and various other society meetings were held in Br. Ottin Olson's spacious home, 2632 13th Avenue South. Here we



THE SECOND CHURCH

also held Sunday afternoon Sunday School. On Sunday, April 19th, the new church building was dedicated. Rev. G. L. Morrill preached the dedicatory sermon, from Luke 19-10: "The Son of Man came to seek and save that which was lost." Topic: "The Mission of the Church." The cost of the new church building was \$5,090.93. The debt resting on the property was \$1,835.00, of which \$535.00 was subscribed on the day of dedication.

Brother Iver Larsen resigned the pastorate here December 1, 1892, which makes his total pastorate here 9 years and 4 months. Brother Larsen baptized in all 84 confessed believers. A total of 178 members was added during his pastorate.

The church has been served by 17 pastors, the present pastor included. Rev. J. C. Olsen, one of our own members, baptized one lady. Rev. M. A. Ohrn was here 7 months and baptized 4. Eight members were added while he was here. Rev. O. H. Høien was our Pastor 10 months; 5 were added and 30 subtracted. The church had now 95 good and reliable members.

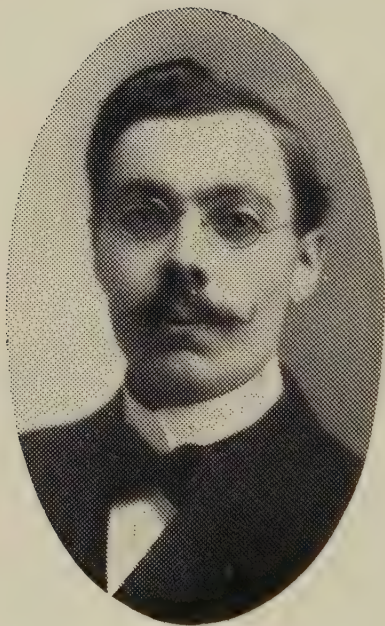


REV. C. W. FINWALL

Rev. C. W. Finwall labored here one year and eleven months and baptized 39. Fifty members were enrolled. H. M. Andersen served 6 months, while a student baptized 2; in all bid 6 welcome. Rev. K. J. Wick baptized 19. 29 joined with us during his 3 years and 6 weeks. Rev. H. A. Sather was here 3 years and baptized 25 and bid 18 members welcome into this church. Rev. Gustav Melby served as Pastor for this church one year and eight months and baptized 13. Thirty-eight members joined us during that pastorate. Rev. O. J. Oie served our church 4 years and 9 months, alternating the first 5 months with Rev. J. O. Gotaas as student Pastors. Br. Oie baptized 32 and bid welcome 92 in all. Rev. Erling Monnes worked in our church while a student at the University one year and two weeks and baptized 8. A total of 20 members



REV. H. A. SATHER



O. J. OIE

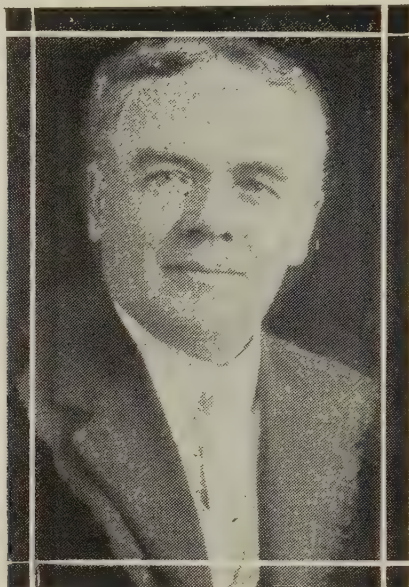


REV. M. B. HOLMEN



REV. OLAF BREIDING

were added. Rev. M. B. Holmen began as Pastor here November 1, 1911, and labored with us 7 years and 11 months. He baptized 39 and 115 in all were admitted to membership. Professor Henry C. Wingblad preached to us and led a part of our prayer meetings during 1 year and 3 months. Nine members joined our ranks during that period. Rev. Olaf Breiding began his work as Pastor here January 20, 1921, and labored here to January 12, 1925. During that time 83 members were added to our church and 36 subtracted. During the next 13 months the church was without a Pastor, but was served by retired local Pastors; 12 members were added during this time and 26 left or dropped from our church roll.



REV. N. NELSON

Rev. N. Nelson, our present Pastor, began his work here February 1, 1926. During his ministry with us 46 members have been added and 42 subtracted. Our present membership is 220.

A summary of our work during these fifty years:

Additions by baptism.....	380
By letters	384
By experience	64
Restoration	16
Total	844
Left by letters	293
By exclusion	102
By erasure	147
By death	82
Total	624
Present membership	220



REV. GUSTAV MELBY

THE GOLDEN JUBILEE

To Him that fills the earth with glory,
And dwells in splendor, dimly seen,
We render thanks for life's brief story,
The things accrued from what has been;
We ponder it and see with joy,
That He has wrought it all so well,
That He in wisdom did employ
The good and ill His love to tell.

Before His throne we humbly bend,
Confessing what we failed to be,
But with contrition gladness blend,
At this our Golden Jubilee,
For He has led His church through all
The changing years since it was born,
And given it a willing soul,
His name and Kingdom to adorn.

The memories of fifty years
Are checkered with the light and shade,
'Mid Baca's vale of bitter tears,

Or Zion's hill with pleasant glades;
We see them blend in harmony,
And know each aspect has its place
To bring to view the mastery
Of God's o'er-ruling love and grace.

To those who wrought and are no more
We honor give, their names revere;
Their feet stand on the splendor-shore,
Where night and danger bring no fear.
And still with us their labors dwell,
We garner where they once did sow,
And of their deeds the days will tell,
In beauty of the evening glow.

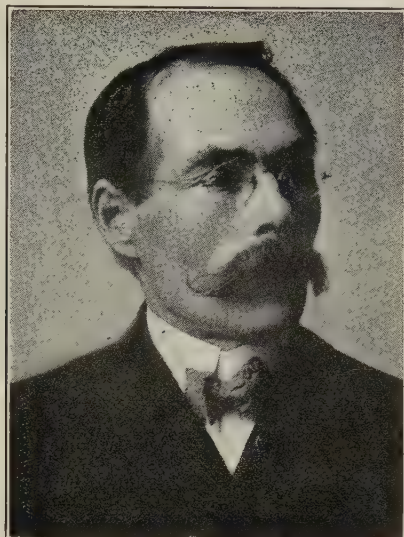
And from the past we gather strength
To onward press to reach the goal,
That from this milestone we at length
May have assurance for our soul;
That His own Kingdom doth remain,
When earthly powers must pass away,
And they who are His own shall reign
With Him in glory, and for aye.
—GUSTAV MELBY.



FOUR CHARTER MEMBERS

Of the original 27 charter members of our church, we rejoice to have with us today Mr. Frederik Petersen, Mr. Charles M. Larson, Mrs. Charles Sundby and Mrs. Rev. Ole Larson. They have wrought faithfully for Jesus Christ and His Church. May God keep and preserve them in His grace and goodness with us for years to come!

The various branches of activity in the Church have during the years unfolded a characteristic fruitage. Each one in its own sphere.



P. E. SATRUM

Our Efficient Treasurer for 35 Years



JOHN L. BRANSMARK

Our Faithful Secretary for 40 Years





MISS EMMA E. ANDERSON

Our Church Missionary



LOUIS OHMAN

Chairman of the Program Committee



PRESENT OFFICERS OF RUTH SOCIETY

The ladies' society "Ruth" was organized December 6, 1878, which makes it about 6 months older than the Church. Its chief aim has always been to assist the finances of the Church. In that it has always proved itself a faithful help-mate, not only toward the Church, but it has unfolded its good deeds to numberless worthy causes. It has proved the value of Christianity.

The Women's Mission Circle was organized January 29, 1879. It has always lived and labored for the evangelization of the world. Such a goal surely ought to make life worth while. The faithfulness and steadfastness of this society is typical and praiseworthy.



PRESENT OFFICERS OF MISSION CIRCLE



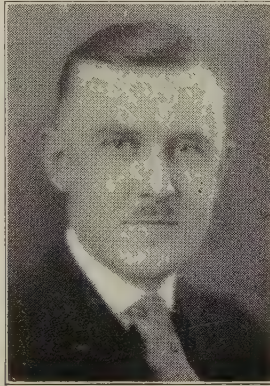
SUPERINTENDENT, TEACHERS AND WORKERS OF SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Sunday School began its existence contemporary with the Church. As a delicate plant from good seed in rich soil, with wise, loving, nursing and watchful leadership, cultivated by the best gardeners in the Church, this plant has grown into a large fruit-bearing tree in the garden of God. Under its ever spreading branches men have found shade and comfort. From its fruit the Church has grown, increased and spread the Gospel to the needy souls at home and abroad.



PRESENT OFFICERS OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIETY

The Young People's Society was organized March 13th, 1888. An organization of lively young Christians possessed with a burning desire for the salvation of others, and a desire to keep in touch with young people who frequent our church. It would be difficult to state what has been the extent of the work of the B. Y. P. U. during the years of its existence. How precious a thing is youthful energy and enthusiasm when turned into the channels of noble service for God and others. The "Happy Sheaf Gatherers" was the name of this new and strong society, which was and is today a real missionary society in and out of the Church. It never agreed to do anything more than real Gospel work in accordance with the plan of the Baptist Church, on the basis of the New Testament. Its spiritual and numerical growth has been gradual and healthy. Brother Richard Hoiland, now in National B. Y. P. U. work, is still with us.



RICHARD HOILAND
National B. Y. P. U. Worker



A GROUP OF WORKERS IN THE HELPING HAND SOCIETY

"The Helping Hand," a young ladies' society, was organized in the winter of 1889; as the Church grew a large need of such an organization was found. And this society has always been a credit to itself and the Church. Like the "Ruth Society" it has supported the Church finances as well as mission finances, besides doing mission work independently. It has been a great social help to young people with which it came in contact. It has been blessed with gifted and devoted leaders.

We must not forget the society "Dorkos." This society laid aside all personal comfort and interest and worked exclusively for the comfortless and needy. This society really worked so arduously and strenuously that it died, but like Tabita of old, its spirit would not rest and has entered the "Ruth" and the "Helping Hand" societies. Good never dies.



PRESENT OFFICERS OF PHILADELPHIA SOCIETY

"Philadelphia," the men's society, was born March 9, 1896, in Rev. C. W. Finwall's home. There were 12 charter members; it now numbers multitudes. Its great goal has always been to win men for Christ, to study useful, practical Christian topics, and assist the Church with its means. This society has always endeavored to be a faithful and forceful helper to the Church.

The Church has always been blessed with talented singers and musicians. The Church choir, an organization which has endured since the early eighties, has served faithfully and well without money and without price.

A number of organizations have come into being and gone out of existence within our Church during these fifty years, such as: "The Bible Readers' Club," "The Christian Culture Club," "Children's Industrial School," "Nordania," "Hjemklong," "Dorkos."



PRESENT CHOIR

Of more recent date we have the Junior Church, an organization of young children which meets Sunday morning and have their service downstairs during the preaching hour.

The Intermediates, an organization of older boys and girls.

The World Wide Guild, an organization of young ladies.

Time will not permit us to review the efforts made in beginning and building up strong missions and Mission Sunday Schools. Beginnings were made on Riverside Avenue, on Minnehaha Avenue, on South Washington Avenue, on Emerson Avenue North, on Como Avenue. These beginnings have had their valuable results and been a blessing because the objects were noble, motives



A GROUP OF THE WORLD WIDE GUILD SOCIETY



PRESENT PASTOR AND BOARD OF DEACONS



PRESENT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

pure, and much labor put down. The last but not the least is the Eben Ezer Mission. Here our Church has labored for several years and had a good Sunday School going, but finally has been given over to our City Mission. But the good work is going on under the leadership of the Temple Baptist Church.

It was a dark and cold Thursday evening, February 8, 1917, about 7 o'clock, when our Church edifice on 7th Street and 13th Avenue South burned down. The neighboring churches sent cordial invitations to us offering all manner of hospitality. The First Swedish Baptist Church on 8th Street and 13th Avenue South proposed to lend us their entire large and comfortable lower auditorium to house our Sunday School, and that we share our morning service with them, and they gave us half of the loose collections. This generous offer we gladly accepted, and we dwelt happy together with our mother church for 9 months.



PRESENT NEW CHURCH

The Young People's and evening services were housed about three months in the Central German Methodist Church on 13th Avenue and 18th Street South.

In May, 1917, these services were transferred to the Eben Ezer, and in November, 1917, the morning services and Sunday School also moved down and took up quarters in the little chapel.

The history of the building of this present beautiful new church building in which we held our first service Sunday, February 16, 1919, holding our services the first two years and four months in the Sunday School auditorium because of lack of funds to finish the main auditorium. Working hard both physically and spiritually, going through a great number of experiences, by the grace of God money was in sight, and under the leadership of the board of trustees, the building committee, John Christensen, Martin Torgesen and Wm. Dahl, the upstairs was completed and dedicated June 5, 1921. The Danish-Norwegian Baptist Conference was held here simultaneously. Those were happy days of real advancement. Thank God for that! On that day \$4,444.00 was subscribed.

The cost of this new church building was \$32,200.00. There was, however, a small note or mortgage left which was paid in full October, 1924.

Several lady missionaries have put down much hard and noble work and deserve honorable mention: Miss Sophia Rasmusen, Mrs. Mary Molmsten, Miss Louise Noch, Miss Carrieth C. Olson, Miss Emma Anderson and Miss Lena Gjertsen.

Several publications have served the church from time to time, such as the annual "Prospectus," "The Nordania," "The Church Bulletin," and the Church Directory or handbook.

The amount of money reported raised during these fifty years is as follows:	
For current expenses	\$ 95,733.57
for missions	31,042.61
Value of church property.....	32,200.00
Total	\$158,976.18

Besides many smaller donations and gifts which has not been recorded.





REV. N. J. LEE
Compiler of This History

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